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August 7, 2007

TO: Each Health Deputy

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *Jonathan E. Fielding*
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION TASK FORCE (PANTF) AND THE LA COLLABORATIVE**

The purpose of this memo is to inform you of our plan to integrate the Physical Activity and Nutrition Task Force (PANTF) into the Los Angeles Collaborative for Healthy, Active Children (LA Collaborative). The two coalitions are both dedicated to decreasing obesity and its associated chronic diseases, conduct similar activities, and have overlapping memberships. This has resulted in a duplication of efforts by county staff and community members that participate on both coalitions.

We have developed this plan in conjunction with the leadership and general membership of both coalitions and all parties agree with the plan. Therefore, with the support of both coalitions, we are planning to: 1) sunset PANTF and invite PANTF members to join the LA Collaborative (many are already members); and 2) continue working with our community partners on the six key recommendations that were the focus of PANTF, through the LA Collaborative and the programmatic activities of Public Health.

Background

PANTF was established by Public Health to oversee implementation of the Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Task Force on Child and Youth Fitness' recommendations, which were approved by the Board of Supervisors in August 2002. The LA Collaborative was created in 2003 to address the epidemic of overweight and unfit children in Los Angeles County, and is a mandated activity of the State Nutrition Network funding received by the Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Division (Chronic Disease Prevention). Both coalitions are comprised of representatives from community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, health care institutions, school districts, university-based policy institutes, and various County departments.

Rationale for Merging the two Coalitions Under the Banner of the LA Collaborative

a. Eliminate Duplication of Efforts

- Many PANTF and LA Collaborative members attend both coalitions' meetings. Merging the two coalitions would reduce the burden on community members by decreasing the number of meetings they need to attend.
- Public Health provides administrative support to both coalitions, resulting in an inefficient use of staff time given the overlapping work done by the two coalitions.
- The Nutrition Program is mandated by the USDA, its primary source of funding, to coordinate the LA Collaborative. Therefore, it is not an option at this time to dissolve the LA Collaborative.

b. PANTF's Current Policy Work Has Been Transferred to Chronic Disease Prevention

- PANTF has successfully addressed two major policy areas—workplace wellness via the development of the LA County Food Policy and legislative advocacy that has led to Board support for legislation promoting healthy eating and physical activity. Chronic Disease Prevention will coordinate the implementation of the Food Policy with the involvement of LA Collaborative members, including former PANTF members. Public Health will also continue to conduct legislative analyses and make recommendations to the Board on legislation related to nutrition, physical activity, and other strategies to control the obesity epidemic.

c. PANTF's other key recommendations have been or are being implemented

The Food Policy and the legislative activities address two of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Child and Youth Fitness' recommendations. The remaining four recommendations are being addressed by existing Public Health programs:

1) Secure funding for obesity prevention activities:

Several County programs actively secure funds for obesity prevention efforts on an ongoing basis, including Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health, Chronic Disease Prevention and the Area Health Offices. Public Health is also supporting community-based organizations in their efforts to secure funding for obesity prevention.

2) Promote joint/shared use of facilities:

The Physical Activity and Cardiovascular Health Program is working with external partners to promote joint-use, including serving on LAUSD's Joint Use Subcommittee for New School Construction.

3) Encourage all school districts to adopt SB 19 nutritional standards at all grade levels for foods sold outside of the federal meal program:

The State passed legislation that requires all school districts to follow nutrition standards for food and beverage sales by 2009. Therefore, efforts around this recommendation will now focus on implementation and will be led by the Nutrition Program with support from the Collaborative.

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4) Appoint County department personnel to collaborate with community-based committees and agencies to oversee implementation activities:

Public Health originally established PANTF to promote collaboration between County department personnel and community-based organizations. This function is now being accomplished through the LA Collaborative and the Chronic Disease Prevention Division.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

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